

Zelda II: The Adventure of Link

Zelda II: The Adventure of Link^[a] is an action role-playing video game with platforming elements. The second installment in *The Legend of Zelda* series, it was developed and published by Nintendo for the Family Computer Disk System on January 14, 1987, less than a year after the original *The Legend of Zelda* was released and seven months before North America saw the release of the first *Zelda* title. The game was released in North America and the PAL region for the Nintendo Entertainment System in late 1988, almost two years after its initial release in Japan.

The Adventure of Link is a direct sequel to the original *The Legend of Zelda*, again involving the protagonist, Link, on a quest to save Princess Zelda, who has fallen under a sleeping spell. *The Adventure of Link*'s emphasis on side-scrolling and role-playing elements, however, was a significant departure from its predecessor. For much of the series' three decade history, the game served as the only technical sequel to the original title, as all other entries in the series were either prequels or occurred in an alternative reality, according to the official *Zelda* timeline. This eventually changed with the release of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* in 2017, which serves as the very latest chapter in the overall series continuity^[2]

The game was a critical and financial success, and introduced elements such as Link's "magic meter" and the Dark Link character that would become commonplace in future *Zelda* games, although the role-playing elements, such as experience points, and the platform-style side-scrolling and limited lives have not been used since in canonical games. *The Adventure of Link* was followed by *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1992.

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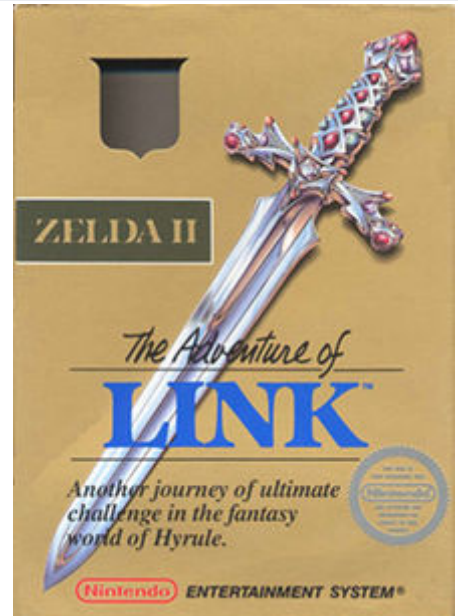
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Zelda II: The Adventure of Link



North American box art

Developer(s)	Nintendo R&D4
Publisher(s)	Nintendo
Director(s)	Tadashi Sugiyama Yoichi Yamada
Producer(s)	Shigeru Miyamoto
Designer(s)	Kazunobu Shimizu
Writer(s)	Takashi Tezuka
Composer(s)	Akito Nakatsuka
Series	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>
Platform(s)	Famicom Disk System Nintendo Entertainment System GameCube Game Boy Advance
Release	January 14, 1987
Genre(s)	Action role-playing
Mode(s)	Single-player

Gameplay

Zelda II: The Adventure of Link is an action role-playing game bearing little resemblance to the first game in *The Legend of Zelda* series or later games in the series. *The Adventure of Link* features side-scrolling areas within a larger top-down world map rather than the exclusively top-down perspective of the previous title. The side-scrolling gameplay and experience system are similar to features of the *Castlevania* series, especially *Castlevania II: Simon's Quest* (also released for the Family Computer's Disk System peripheral in 1987). The game incorporates a strategic combat system, a proximity continue system based on lives, an experience points (EXP) system, magic spells, and more interaction with non-player characters (NPCs). Apart from the non-canonical CD-i *The Legend of Zelda* games, *Link: The Faces of Evil* and *Zelda: The Wand of Gamelon*, no other game in the series includes a life feature. The side angle was used again in *Link's Awakening* and the other Game Boy entries, but was not the main angle in those games, which relied primarily on the top-down view^[3]

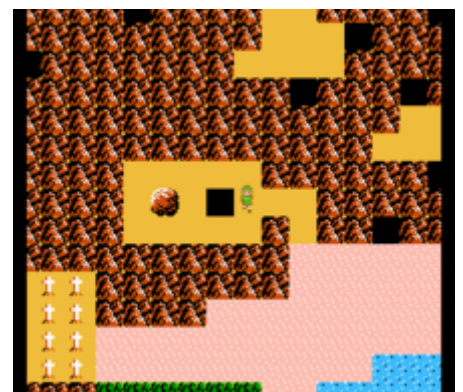
Experience levels

In this installment, Link gains experience points to upgrade his attack, magic, and life by defeating enemies.^[4] This feature is exclusive to *Zelda II* in the game series. He can raise each of these attributes to a maximum of eight levels. Raising a life level will decrease the damage Link receives when hit, raising a magic level will decrease the magic points (MP) cost of spells, and raising an attack level will strengthen his sword's offensive power. Each attribute requires a different amount of experience to level up, with the life level requiring the least number of points to level and attack requiring the most.^[4] When enough points are acquired to raise an attribute, the player may choose to level up that attribute or to cancel and continue gaining experience points towards the next level in another attribute. Once Link has raised an attribute to the maximum level of eight, further advances in that attribute will earn Link an extra life, without advancing the attribute itself.^[4] Link begins the game with four Heart Containers and four Magic Containers and can acquire up to four more of each, permanently increasing his life points and magic points respectively. Other games in *The Legend of Zelda* series only allow Link to increase his strength through new weapons, items, and Heart Containers. Certain enemies drain Link's experience when they attack, but he will never lose a level once raised.^[3] When a game ends or is saved, the cartridge records Link's current ability levels and the number of experience points required for the next increase, but resets his accumulated points to zero.

Overworld map and side-scrolling

The Adventure of Link plays out in a two-mode dynamic. The overworld, the area where the majority of the action occurs in other *The Legend of Zelda* games, is still from a top-down perspective, but it now serves as a hub to the other areas. Whenever Link enters a new area such as a town, the game switches to a side-scrolling view. This mode is where most of the action takes place, and, with the exception of traveling across lava and water, it is the only mode in which Link can take damage and be killed^[3]

Link also enters this mode when attacked by wandering monsters. Whenever the player traverses the various environments of Hyrule, enemy silhouettes appear and pursue him. Of the three random creatures that appear, there are three types which correspond to the relative difficulty of the monsters in battle mode: a small, weak blob denoting easy enemies, a large, strong biped denoting harder enemies, and a Fairy, which will put Link on a single screen with a free Fairy to refill his health. This separate method of traveling and entering combat is one of many aspects adapted from the role-playing video game genre.^[3] Stepping onto particular spots in the overworld map will automatically switch the game to a side-scrolling mode for an enemy encounter or item pickup.



A screenshot of the overworld

Combat system

The Adventure of Link has a more complex combat system than its predecessor. Armed with a sword and shield, Link must alternate between standing and crouching positions in order to attack enemies and defend himself; for example, the Iron Knuckle enemy changes the height of its attack and its shield depending on Link's current stance, forcing Link to change stances until he has a chance to attack safely. Link has the ability to jump, which can be used for attacking tall or airborne enemies, and can be used for evasion. Eventually, he can learn techniques for downward and upward stabs in midair.^[3]

Magic and special items

Though Link must still collect several items in order to progress in the game (as in the previous and subsequent installments of the series), these special items grant abilities which either remain in permanent use for the rest of the game or can only be activated in the overworld. In place of actively used items, *The Adventure of Link* features eight spells for Link to use during action scenes. Each spell is learned from a different wise man in one of the eight towns within Hyrule. Link often has to complete side-quests, such as retrieving lost items, before they will teach him their spells. Some spells and items are necessary for advancing beyond certain points in the game. Also, the Life spell becomes the main means of recovering health during action scenes, since healing Fairies are only found in rare fixed spots, and only appear randomly as overworld encounters.^[3]

Replay

Like its predecessor, *The Adventure of Link* allows storing up to three games in the cartridge's memory. Once the game has been completed, selecting the corresponding file in the main menu allows starting a new game preserving the acquired experience levels, techniques, and magic spells (but no special items, Heart and Magic containers, or extra lives, which must be obtained again).^[3]

Plot



Zelda under an enchanted sleep

Several years after the events of *The Legend of Zelda*,^[5] the now-sixteen-year-old Link notices a strange mark on the back of his left hand, exactly like the crest of Hyrule. He seeks out Impa, who responds by taking Link to the North Castle, where a door has been magically sealed for generations. Impa places the back of Link's left hand on the door, and it opens, revealing a sleeping maiden. Impa tells Link that the maiden is Zelda (not the Zelda from the first game), the princess of Hyrule from long ago, and the origin of the "Legend of Zelda". Zelda's brother had tried to force her into telling their recently deceased father's secrets concerning the last of three sacred golden triangle treasures of his kingdom, known collectively as the Triforce. Princess Zelda refused to reveal its location, and the prince's wizard friend, in anger, tried to strike her down with a spell. Zelda fell under a powerful sleeping spell, but the wizard was unable to control the wildly arcing magic and was killed by it. The prince, filled with remorse and unable to reverse the spell, had his sister placed in

the castle tower, in the hope that she would one day be awakened. He decreed that princesses born to the royal family from that point on would be named Zelda, in remembrance of this tragedy.^[4]

Impa says that the mark on Link's hand means that he is the hero chosen to awaken Zelda. She gives Link a chest containing six crystals and ancient writings that only a great future king of Hyrule can read. Link finds that he can read the document, even though he has never seen the language before; it indicates that the crystals must be set into statues within six palaces scattered all over Hyrule. This will open the way to the Great Palace, which contains the Triforce of Courage. Only the power of the combined Triforces can awaken the enchanted Zelda. Taking the crystals, Link sets out to restore them to their palaces. Meanwhile, the followers of Ganon are seeking to kill Link, as sprinkling his blood on Ganon's ashes will bring Ganon back to life.^[4]

Ultimately, Link restores the crystals to the six palaces, defeating a strong guardian within each one to do so, and enters the Great Palace. After venturing deep inside, Link must battle a flying creature known as Thunderbird, followed by a shadowy doppelgänger of himself known as Dark Link. Link then claims the Triforce of Courage and returns to Zelda. The three triangles unite into the

collective Triforce, and Link's wish awakens Zelda.^[3] The game ends as they (presumably) kiss under a falling curtain.

Development and releases

Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of the original *The Legend of Zelda*, intended to make *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* fundamentally different from its predecessor. A different team was assembled to develop the game.^[6] However, Miyamoto (who was credited under the pseudonym "Miyahon") was the producer, and Takashi Tezuka returned to write the story and script.^{[7][8]} *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* was directed by Tadashi Sugiyama (credited as "Sugiyana"), for whom it was the first project at Nintendo.^{[7][9]} The game's music was composed by Akito Nakatsuka (credited as "Tukasan").^{[7][10]}

The Adventure of Link was originally released on the Family Computer Disk System (FDS) before its worldwide release. Like its predecessor, the FDS version appears to be an earlier version of the game, with a few obvious differences. In the English release, the dungeons each have different colors, whereas in the FDS version they are all gray. Also, the two dungeon bosses Carrok and Volvagia (the latter being initially named Barba in the NES release) have different graphical appearances.^[11] The game over screen in the English version features the silhouette of Ganon from the chest up, with the text saying "Game Over/Return of Ganon", whereas the FDS game over screen is a plain black screen with the text saying "Return of Ganon/The End". There are some slight additions to the dungeons, as well as a handful of differences on the dungeons themselves. Due to an additional sound chip that the Disk System has, when Nintendo ported *Zelda II* over to the NES, they had to eliminate some musical elements, especially from the title screen. On the main map, the icons denoting attacking monsters look different, but the most significant change is the spending of experience points, as Link's three attributes cost the same, unlike the worldwide release. Further, the game is designed to promote balanced leveling, as the saved game on the disk will only let the levels for the attributes go as high as whatever is set the lowest (e.g. if Life is at 5 and Strength is at 4, but Magic is at 1, then the saved game will reflect all as level 1), while still saving the data regarding crystals that have been placed and items that have been collected. These differences make leveling up in the game very different.^[12]

The Adventure of Link was re-released in 2003 on *The Legend of Zelda: Collector's Edition* disc for the GameCube,^[13] and again in 2004 as part of the Classic NES Series for Game Boy Advance,^[14] with minor changes. The intro text was changed to read "third Triforce" rather than "No.3 Triforce" and the copyright date was altered to read "1987–2004 Nintendo". The death animation removed flashing colors in an effort to prevent seizures, replacing it with a solid red color. There were also various graphical and audio tweaks. It was released as the 100th title on the Wii's Virtual Console in Japan on January 23, 2007,^{[15][16]} in Europe and Australia on February 9, 2007, and was released in North America on June 4, 2007.^[17] The text changes were not made in this version, but it does feature the solid red color in the death animations from the GameCube and Game Boy Advance versions.

The Adventure of Link was re-released again on the Nintendo 3DS's Virtual Console in September 2011, alongside the first *Legend of Zelda* game, as part of the "3DS Ambassadors" program. It was one of ten NES games for owners who purchased their 3DS consoles before the price drop.^[18] It was later made available for all 3DS owners in Japan on June 6, 2012,^[19] in Europe on September 13,^[20] and in North America on November 22.^[21] *The Adventure of Link* was also re-released on the Wii U's Virtual Console in September 2013.^{[22][23]}



Shigeru Miyamoto was the creator of the first game and served as producer for the sequel

Reception

Original version

Upon its release in North America, *Zelda II* became one of the most popular NES games of 1988, with many retailers reporting that the game was selling out that

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year.^[36] The game ultimately sold 4.38 million copies worldwide.^[37]

In 1987, *Famicom Tsūshin* (now *Famitsu*) gave it a score of 36 out of 40, based on a panel of four reviewers giving it ratings of 8, 10, 9 and 9 out of 10. This made it their second highest-rated game of 1987, behind only *Dragon Quest II*. These were also the only two games to have received a *Famitsu* score of 35/40 or above up until 1987.^[31] *Play magazine* praised the unique gameplay, saying that "it's this combination of unique elements that creates an action-RPG experience unlike any other".^[35] *Nintendo Power* said that the game was "an entertaining and natural step in the franchise's evolution,"^[34] and awarded it their Game of the Year Award for 1988. *Zelda II* was reviewed in 1992 by issue #2 of *Total!* magazine, where it received an 82% rating, due in great part to mediocre sub-scores for *music* and *graphics*.^[38] A 1993 review of the game was printed in issue #198 of *Dragon* by Sandy Petersen, in the "Eye of the Monitor" column. Petersen gave the game 3 out of 5 stars.^[30]

Zelda II was rated the 110th best game made on a Nintendo System in *Nintendo Power's* Top 200 Games list.^[39] In August 2008, *Nintendo Power* listed it as the 12th best Nintendo Entertainment System video game, describing it as a radical and refreshing departure from its predecessor^[40]

Aggregate scores	
Aggregator	Score
GameRankings	78.14% (NES) ^[24]
	68.88% (GBA) ^[25]
Metacritic	73 / 100 (GBA) ^[26]
Review scores	
Publication	Score
1UP.com	65 / 100 (GBA) ^[29]
AllGame	★★★★★ (NES) ^[27]
	★★★★★ (GBA) ^[28]
Dragon	★★★★★ (NES) ^[30]
Famitsu	36 / 40 (NES) ^[31]
GameSpot	6.9 / 10 (GBA) ^[32]
IGN	8.5 / 10 (GBA) ^[33]
Nintendo Power	72 / 100 (GBA) ^[34]
Play	91% (NES) ^[35]

Re-releases

IGN said that the game is a "recommended and playable adventure" but also said, "don't expect the same gameplay from the truly classic Zelda titles."^[33] 1UP.com praised the game's length, citing that "you can certainly find plenty here to keep you busy for some time."^[29] The game also received some criticism.GameSpot said that while the game is "decent enough to make it worth the \$5 price [on the Wii's Virtual Console]", it features "questionable design decision[s]" and can get confusing if players don't have the help of walkthroughs.^[32] The GBA version of the game had an aggregated score of 73 on Metacritic.^[26] and an aggregated score of 68.88 on GameRankings^[25] making it the game of the series with the lowest score in both websites.

Legacy

Many elements first introduced in this game have remained in the series. For instance, non-player characters(NPCs) were present in *The Legend of Zelda* but their role was rather limited. Starting with *The Adventure of Link*, *Zelda* games have prominently featured a variety of NPCs who play pivotal roles in Link's quests.^[41] *Zelda II* was also one of the first games where NPCs walked around and seemingly had their own agendas, giving the world a life of its own rather than being a simple stage for the story to unfold.^[42] The use of metered *magic* and spells has also carried over into other *Zelda* games. The *Triforce of Courage* makes its first appearance in *The Adventure of Link* and plays an important role in later *Zelda* games, as it is strongly associated with Link. *Dark Link* is a version of Link's Shadow which appears in *Ocarina of Time*, a similar Link clone called Shadow Link appears in *Four Swords Adventures*, and yet another appears in*Spirit Tracks*, as well as in A Link Between Worlds.^[43]

Additionally, *The Adventure of Link* was one of the first games to combine *role-playing video game* and *platforming* elements to a considerable degree.^[44] Over the next few years, a number of Japanese-made games appeared with a similar format; major titles such as *Cadash* (1989) closely resemble *The Adventure of Link*, with side-scrolling platform stages supplemented by RPG-like statistical

systems, weapons, armor, magic spells, and so forth.

Most of the sages in *Ocarina of Time* bear the same names as towns from *The Adventure of Link* (Rauru, Ruto, Saria, Nabooru, and Darunia; excluding Impa). Another town, Mido, is also the name of a character in Kokiri Forest. However, in the in-game chronology, the towns were named after the characters. *The Adventure of Link* is also the only *Zelda* game of the main English releases not to use "*The Legend of Zelda*" in its title, the only *Zelda* game to feature "lives" counting down, and therefore the only game in the series to include 1-up dolls.^[45] The next *Zelda* game released after *The Adventure of Link* was *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* for the *Super Famicom* in 1991, which follows new Link and Zelda characters and returns to the top-down style of the original.

There are a small number of side-scrolling areas in *The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening*; these areas were mainly underground tunnels and caves. The series broke away from the top-down style again in 1998 when *Ocarina of Time* was released on the *Nintendo 64*, with 3D graphics.^[46] A new version of the composition "Temple", arranged by Shogo Sakai, is featured in *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, where it is played during the "Hyrule Temple" stage and the "Underground Maze" level. A variation of the track, as well as a new version of the "Grand Palace" level song, also appears in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*. The track was later once again updated and appeared twice, as the "StreetPass Battle Theme" as well as a slower version for the "Battle Victory" music, in the *Nintendo 3DS* game *A Link Between Worlds*, making it the only subsequent *Zelda* game to include theme music that originated in *The Adventure of Link*. The StreetPass battle mode is itself inspired by the final boss fight of *Zelda II*; StreetPass fights occur between one player as Link and the other player as Shadow/Dark Link.

Zelda II was also very influential to other NES games like *Faxanadu*, *Moon Crystal* and *The Battle of Olympus*.^[47] Moreover, the *Adventure Time: Hey Ice King! Why'd You Steal Our Garbage?!!* title, developed by *WayForward Technologies*, was intended to play like *Zelda II* and pays homage to it.^[48] It features very similar gameplay and references to the *Zelda* series.

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Notes

- a. Originally released in Japan as *Rinku no Bōken* (Japanese: リンクの冒険). The full Japanese title varies between sources: while the Japanese packaging features the subtitle *THE LEGEND OF ZELDA 2* written in English above the main Japanese title, a TV ad for the game instead refers to the game as *zeruda no Densetsu Pāto Tū: Rinku no Bōken* (ゼルダの伝説パート2 リンクの冒険).^[1]

External links

- Official website

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